2015

Trust, well-being and the community of philosophical inquiry

Laura D'Olimpio

University of Notre Dame Australia, laura.dolimpio@nd.edu.au

Peer-reviewed paper

Trust, well-being and the community of philosophical inquiry

Laura D'Olimpio
The University of Notre Dame Australia

Trust is vital for individuals to flourish and have a sense of well-being in their community. A trusting society allows people to feel safe, communicate with each other and engage with those who are different to themselves without feeling fearful. In this article, I employ an Aristotelian framework in order to identify trust as a virtue and I defend the need to cultivate trust in children. I discuss the case study of Buranda State School in Queensland, Australia, as an instance of successful school reform that reinstates trust in an educational setting. Buranda makes use of the community of inquiry (CoI) pedagogy practiced by advocates of philosophy for children (P4C). Educators may create a safe space in the classroom by using the CoI and giving children the chance to voice their ideas and build upon, as well as question, those of others in a democratic and respectful manner. Through this pragmatic dialogue, trust may be established, along with a sense of belonging that supports well-being in the classroom as well as in life.

Introduction

Trust is vital for individuals to flourish and have a sense of well-being in their community. A trusting society allows people to feel safe, communicate with each other and engage with those who are different to themselves without feeling fearful. Interpersonal or relational trust highlights our nature as social selves and this incorporates an aspect of vulnerability. Karen Frost-Arnold (2014) notes that "this vulnerability makes trustworthiness both a moral and epistemic virtue" (p. 1957). Frost-Arnold draws upon the work of Annette Baier (1984; 1992), who notes that parents have to find the right balance between teaching their children to be trusting and trustworthy, and avoid the two extremes of undue timidity or fear and suspicion (Baier, 1992, pp. 140-141). If trust is a virtue, which I claim it is, then it is a topic of interest to moral philosophers. Trust is also a topic of interest to teachers and parents when we refer to cultivating a trusting and trustworthy attitude in children.

Robert Solomon and Fernando Flores answer the question of "why talk about trust?" in their book, *Building Trust* (2003, p.153):

> Why talk about trust? Not only because trust has long been neglected as an essential philosophical and ethical concept, but also because talking about trust is essential to building trust. Even if talking about trust can be awkward or uncomfortable, it is only by talking about trust, and trusting, that trust can be created, maintained and restored.

Solomon and Flores (2003, p. 154) refer to (responsible) trust as a conscious choice that may be chosen over the *fashionable* option of being cynical. One way we can approach creating trustworthy and trusting individuals is by examining early childhood education. Baier (1992, p. 141) notes that we do seem to have some innate capacity for trusting and meeting trust. In these formative years, trust as a relational attitude should be nurtured so that children develop into trusting and trustworthy citizens.

In this article, I defend the need to cultivate trust and I discuss the case study of Buranda State School in Queensland, Australia, as an instance of successful school reform that reinstates trust in an educational setting. Buranda makes use of the CoI pedagogy practiced by advocates of P4C philosophy *for* or *with* children which has been successfully used in kindergarten classrooms with pre-primary children (Daniel & Delsol, 2005), as well as being used in primary and high school classrooms. P4C is a useful praxis that allows educators to create a safe space in their classroom whereby children have the chance to voice their ideas and build upon, as well as question, those of others in a democratic and respectful manner. Through this pragmatic dialogue, trust may be established, along with a sense of belonging that supports well-being in the classroom as well as in life.

Why trust?

Baier (1992) asserts that her "assumption will be that we would, other things equal, prefer to be able both to trust individual persons and rely on the institutions that structure their conduct, so prefer to be able to regard it a good thing if people are trusting people" (p. 137). This may be a modernist assumption; nonetheless, Nishikawa and Stolle (2012) note that fewer and fewer people think that others can be trusted. This claim rests on their analysis of a range of data including surveys, past research and media reports, and they cite that in the 1960s in the USA, 55% thought you could trust others, yet by 1999 that figure had dropped to 34% (p. 133). Nishikawa and Stolle point out that, apart from Robert Putnam (2000) speaking about how children are socialised to trust (or not) through technological means such as media and television, there is little writing on how we can raise children to be trusting citizens. Nishikawa and Stolle (2012) find this lack of literature odd given that "trust is one of the most fundamental prosocial attitudes that is believed to be developed early in one's childhood" (p. 134).

Cultural expectations of trust can differ. Baier (1992) notes that "there are varying climates of trust" (p. 143) that are influenced by history and social context. Nishikawa and Stolle (2012) point out that "parents are believed to influence and shape general attitudes of their offspring . . . which includes trusting strangers and people not known, children in several countries get the message early in life: it is a dangerous world outside" (p. 134). Yet not trusting others makes it difficult to function in a community and, provided trust is reasonable or warranted, a trusting attitude has an important role to play in helping individuals flourish in society. Trust allows individuals to connect with and support others, by engaging and communicating with others who may be different from themselves. In fact:

Generalized trust has been regarded as an important ingredient for social and political life. In the political sphere, generalized trust allows citizens to join forces in social and political groups. . . . In the social sphere, generalized trust facilitates life in diverse societies, fosters acts of tolerance, and promotes acceptance of others (2012, pp. 136-137).

Given that Nishikawa and Stolle identify the positive features of generalised trust, it makes sense that they then question how trust may be shaped in childhood. Their research investigates the communication and role modelling done in families which may be influenced by fear. Fear can be engendered through media reports and televised news programs. However, I will focus on the school environment and offer educational institutions as another place that can communicate and model a healthy attitude towards trusting and trustworthiness. If (pre-) schools and teachers can be trusted and the students feel safe in their school/centre environment, this greatly contributes to the well-being of a community and its individual members. Such well-being will be further enhanced if children are treated as trusted members of a community from an early age. This accounts for the need to practice building trust in the pre-school classroom.

Defining trust

We must firstly commence our discussion by offering a definition of trust. Following Carolyn McLeod (2014):

Trust is an attitude that we have towards people whom we hope will be trustworthy, where trustworthiness is a property, not an attitude. Trust and trustworthiness are therefore distinct although, ideally, those whom we trust will be trustworthy, and those who are trustworthy will be trusted. For trust to be warranted (i.e. plausible) in a relationship, the parties to that relationship must have attitudes toward one another that permit trust. Moreover, for trust to be warranted (i.e. well-grounded), both parties must be trustworthy.

In this article, I will utilise a virtue ethics framework to claim that trust is a virtue as it lies mid-point on the scale between naivety and cynicism. Aristotle (1876) explains that, because humans are rational and social creatures, we must work together collaboratively in order to be happy, and the best way to achieve this is by practicing rational habits of action known as the virtues. In his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1876), Aristotle claims that humans aim at *eudaimonia*, often translated as *happiness*, but better referred to as *flourishing*. Trust is a virtue because this character trait, along with being trustworthy, assists us to achieve *eudaimonia*. Aristotle's *doctrine of the mean* is the method we use to figure out what we should do by considering our subjective situation. The virtuous response will be mid-point between excessive and deficient behaviour. Furthermore, the virtues do not stand alone but, rather, they go together, and *phronesis* or practical wisdom requires that virtues such as trust are supported by discernment and prudence. If educators are to nurture the trusting nature of children, they must also encourage the critical thinking skills that accompany good decision making so that children know when and who to trust. Misplaced or blind trust is not a virtue and is unlikely to result in happiness.

Nancy Nyquist Potter (2004) defines a trustworthy person as,

> one who can be counted on, as a matter of the sort of person he or she is, to take care of those things that others entrust to one and (following the Doctrine of the Mean) whose ways of caring are neither excessive nor deficient. (p. 16)

If trust is a virtue, then the excessive quality of naivety and the deficient quality of cynicism may, on this framework, be considered vices. The virtues are things that assist individuals to live a flourishing life, so these character traits lie at the heart of one's well-being. We learn the virtues early on through the habits of actions we practice that are influenced by our environment and upbringing, our peers and role models. A person's character is developed according to their habitual actions. Aristotle (1876, book 11, chap. 1) explains that the virtues arise in us neither according to nature nor contrary to nature, but nature gives us the capacity to acquire the virtues, and they are only attained via habituation. The trustworthy person, then, is habitually trustworthy. Furthermore, society will flourish if its members are virtuous and able to trust one another.

Trust, as one of the virtues, is therefore an essential ingredient for a flourishing life; being able to trust is vital to one's well-being. Braddock (2010, p. 310) offers an empirical defence of what he calls the "Aristotelian Virtue Condition (AVC)": namely, the Aristotelian claim that "moral virtue is (noninstrumentally) necessary for human well-being" (p. 295). In using the term "well-being", Braddock deliberately moves away from the traditional Neo-Aristotelian use of the word "happiness" in order to more accurately defend the kind of flourishing to which we refer when we say the virtues are necessary for *eudaimonia*. If we accept that trust is a virtue and, as such, is conducive to our well-being, then we must ask how we go about cultivating trust and trustworthiness from an early age. Role modelling will occur at home as well as at school, commencing with pre-school and kindergarten. Thus early childhood educators are uniquely positioned to cultivate a trusting environment from which children can learn appropriate prosocial behaviours such as being trustworthy. A trusting educational environment will also include trustworthy teachers, parents and administrators within the school community who are also able to trust one another.

Trust and vulnerability

Trust is a difficult concept to define yet we can see that trust is a relational attitude. A utilitarian or functional account of trust claims that someone is trusted when they can be relied upon, yet this seems to be too narrow a definition that does not capture the nuance or emotionality of the concept of what it means to be trustworthy. The functional account of trust also fails to consider the intention of the moral agent upon whom I trust. Intention is an important consideration as, for example, I rely upon an alarm clock and when it lets me down I may feel disappointed but this is a different feeling to when I am let down by a close friend. Indeed, having my trust betrayed is a personal feeling and this differs to my being let down by the postman who, if they fail to deliver my urgent letter may leave me feeling annoyed or disappointed, yet I am unlikely to feel personally betrayed. To attribute trustworthiness to someone is more than

simply saying that we can rely upon them; as Baier (1986) explains, "trusting can be betrayed, or at least let down, and not just disappointed" (p. 235).

Trusting does have an aspect of making oneself vulnerable by opening up to the possibility of being laughed at, taken advantage of or being tricked. Pamela Hieronymi (2008) points out that you can rely on someone without trusting them. In this instance, if the person you rely on lets you down, you may be disappointed, but it is only if you trusted them that you would feel betrayed. Hieronymi (2008, p. 215) asserts:

> I will take vulnerability to betrayal as a kind of touchstone for trust: whereas misplaced reliance is merely disappointed, a trust is betrayed. Thus, one trusts only if one in some way risks betrayal should one be disappointed. Otherwise, one merely relies, or perhaps only acts-as-if one trusts.

Thus, trust makes us vulnerable; however, it is still better to trust than to not, even though we should rightly practice discernment and not trust *blindly.*

There are several factors that relational trust seems to require for trust to be considered rational or warranted. Bryk and Schneider (2003) report on a longitudinal study they conducted of 400 elementary schools in Chicago, USA, whereby they compiled evidence that indicated trust was a central factor in successful school reform. Alongside structural conditions (such as funding), Bryk and Schneider claim effective educational communities require human resources such as trust and respect in order to effect positive change (2003, p. 40). They state that:

> Relational trust is grounded in the social respect that comes from the kinds of social discourse that take place across the school community. Respectful exchanges are marked by genuinely listening to what each person has to say and by taking these views into account in subsequent actions. Even when people disagree, individuals can still feel valued if others respect their opinions. (p. 42)

Alongside respect, relational trust requires personal regard, which often rests on competence and personal integrity. Personal regard, according to Bryk and Schneider, "springs from the willingness of participants to extend themselves beyond the formal requirements of a job definition or a union contract" (p. 42), and competence relates to the participant's ability to successfully achieve desirable outcomes. Personal integrity is a judgement made of one's character and their morals. Teachers and parents will value one another if they believe each is placing the welfare of the children first, as this illuminates the moral perspective guiding one's behaviour and work ethic (p. 43). Finally, a crucial factor that supports school reform and assists to cultivate feelings of trust alongside loyalty to a school is the role modelling done at a leadership level. Bryk and Schneider note that "principals' actions play a key role in developing and sustaining relational trust" (p. 44).

Knowing who and when to trust is a matter of discernment and practical wisdom. As Aristotle pointed out, this practical wisdom is not something that is taught, but rather must be learnt by doing. Kraut (2014) explains:

> Ethical virtue is fully developed only when it is combined with practical wisdom. A low-grade form of ethical virtue emerges in us during childhood as we are repeatedly placed in situations that call for appropriate actions and emotions; but as we rely less on others and become capable of doing more of our own thinking, we learn to develop a larger picture of human life, our deliberative skills improve, and our emotional responses are perfected.

Virtuous character traits such as trustworthiness therefore need to be practiced. As trust is conducive to students' well-being and educational improvement, we may consider how to cultivate trust in the classroom.

Cultivating trust

In order to create a trusting society, we must consider building trustworthiness and trust in individuals. One way we can practice trust is through a community of inquiry (CoI), the methodology practiced by advocates of philosophy in schools and philosophy for children (P4C). Matthew Lipman (1991) started P4C in the 1970s, drawing heavily on the pragmatic philosophy of John Dewey (1997, 2004). Claiming that philosophy need not be confined to universities, Lipman maintained that children could practice critical thinking skills through the use of dialogue and by using age-appropriate narratives as a stimulus text. Lipman (1991) defines critical thinking as "thinking that (1) facilitates judgment because it (2) relies on criteria, (3) is self-correcting, and (4) is sensitive to context" (p. 116). By thoughtfully discussing stories that contain philosophical concepts, Lipman hoped to encourage children to ultimately develop into reasonable and democratic citizens. Along with critical thinking skills, Laurance Splitter and Ann Sharp added "caring" and "creative" thinking as equally important skills children should be encouraged to develop (Splitter & Sharp, 1995). Therefore, P4C aims at shaping critical, caring and creative thinkers.

A central pedagogy in the P4C classroom is a CoI. The CoI is a democratic discussion that is led by the participants and facilitated by a teacher. This radicalises the role of teacher who is thinking alongside children as opposed to simply giving students information that they need to learn and be able to recite. The CoI takes seriously the idea that children have their own ideas, questions and voices that are worth listening to and exploring. If Karen Murris (2013) is correct, then we need to listen carefully for children's wisdom and not mistakenly attribute a lack of knowledge and wisdom to them. Epistemic injustice occurs when we make implicit as well as explicit assumptions and prejudices about children and childhood, including stereotypes that children are typically immature and ill-informed. Rather, Murris cites the need for epistemic trust, modesty and equality. By respecting the wisdom children have, children themselves are encouraged to trust their own wisdom and continue to further develop practical wisdom that supports their well-being in the world.

Murris admits that stereotypes of children as unknowing are difficult to shake, but claims that she is not usually referring to instances of information exchange (although she does not rule those out). Instead, she is referring to the child's ability to engage philosophically with concepts and allow new ideas to emerge through dialogue or hermeneutic practice. Murris (2015) further explains:

> When thinking alongside children, everyone needs to 'give' their mind to what there is to think about, which is only possible when adults are also 'open-minded', have epistemic modesty and epistemic trust. If what children say is not heard (but laughed at) – epistemic equality is absent. (p. 334)

The aim of the CoI is to encourage children to think for themselves and trust their own thinking abilities. Thinking is therefore both individual and collective: there is the reflective thinking that is done as an isolated individual, and there is also the thinking that is done in a group whereby ideas are built upon communally as well as challenged or questioned. In a CoI children are often seated in a circle facing each other and the teacher facilitates a discussion based on the students' own questions. In order to generate the students' questions, teachers may firstly read a stimulus text such as *Thinking Stories* by Phil Cam and facilitate an activity using a question quadrant (Cam, 2006) or by playing a game such as "Would you rather?" (http://p4c.com/articles/nursery-question-board).

The question quadrant is a pedagogical tool that is used after an age-appropriate stimulus text is read. Note that the stimulus text does not have to be a narrative; a news article, short video or artwork could be used provided it stimulates the students' imaginations. From the text, students are encouraged to brainstorm questions, which form the focal point for later discussion. The questions the children come up with may be scribed by the teacher on a whiteboard and then later voted upon in order to gain a consensus as to which question should be the central focus of the CoI discussion. Cam's question quadrant divides questions into four different types: open and closed questions; and textual and intellectual questions. Thus, questions are categorised as either closed and answered in the text; closed and answerable by consulting an "expert" (intellectual); open and answerable by pondering the text (imaginative); or open and intellectual, which are the philosophical questions to which there are usually more than one answer. The CoI should be based upon a philosophical question and encourages participants to explore ideas collaboratively in a democratic fashion. Students participating in a CoI may grow in self-esteem and confidence as they recognise themselves as one amongst a group of learners. As Laurance Splitter (2011) explains:

> Participating in a CoI allows students, individually and collaboratively, to develop their own ideas and perspectives based on appropriately rigorous modes of thinking *and* against the background of a thorough understanding and appreciation of those ideas and perspectives that, having stood the test of time, may be represented as society's best view of things to date. (p. 497)

However, there seems to be a need for students to trust each other *in the first instance* for the CoI to work well. If there is a lack of trust, a blocked CoI may result.

An effective community of philosophical inquiry

Burgh and Yorshansky (2011) reflect on Ann Sharp's (1993, pp. 338–40) description of a well-functioning as opposed to blocked community of philosophical inquiry:

> In a well functioning community of inquiry participants move from considering themselves and their accomplishments as all important. They become conscious of other members' contributions and allow themselves to transform themselves, eventually becoming part of an interdependent whole. However, in order for this to happen, trust and care of the community must be in place. The absence of care and trust often result in a blocked inquiry in which some members are overpowered by fear and other emotions that keep them from sharing their views and ideas with the community. According to Sharp, this is a sign that something is very wrong. (2011, p. 445)

If a CoI requires participants to trust each other from the outset, then we have a chicken-or-egg scenario here. Some trust must be present in the group for discussion in the CoI to begin and to gain momentum. Only then can a well-functioning CoI hope to further build upon the trust the participants have in each other that allows them to open up enough to discuss various perspectives and ideas. Yet Burgh and Yorshansky (2011) suggest that "behaviours typically seen as blocked inquiry could also provide opportunities for growth" (p. 445). The opportunity provided here is precisely in understanding whether or not the group dynamic is allowing for trust and caring relationships to take place. Crucial at this juncture is the role of the facilitator in recognising the group dynamics at play and then being creative and able to manipulate or alter the group discussion or activities so that new dynamics can be discovered and established. It becomes obvious in such scenarios that the role of the facilitator is not always easy as the teacher is aiming towards a goal of shared and truly democratic dialogue within the CoI, which allows all its members to feel safe and secure when entering into philosophical deliberation.

When it is functioning well, a CoI can assist in developing the bonds of trust between members of the group, which translates well into classroom and schoolyard behaviour. As the CoI allows participants to practice hearing multiple perspectives, students are then better at resolving conflicts that occur when they disagree. Furthermore, the CoI can enhance student self-esteem as they learn to trust themselves and their own ideas. Developing the students' own questions is a central component of the P4C praxis, and these ideas are explored as well as challenged. Centrally, the CoI aims at truth that is shared and democratic. Susan Gardner (2015) highlights why the role of the CoI facilitator is vital in assisting students to deepen their understanding by practicing critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking skills:

> Having said that the facilitator must be ruthless in ensuring quality of thought, relevance, consistently (or the awareness of the lack thereof) with the thoughts of others as well as the topic under discussion, the facilitator must also create an environment which is "relatively" risk-free. If students believe that they will be "crucified" or ridiculed or embarrassed if they are not able to do what in fact they are not yet able to do, i.e., think well, they may be reluctant to

> speak up in class at all and then the whole process will come to a
> grinding halt. So the facilitator needs to be merciful with regard to
> the quality of what is actually said while being merciless with regard
> to the attempt for depth. (p. 15)

One practical way that teachers may practice their skills as facilitators and build the bonds of trust with other teachers in their school is to sit in a CoI of their own. If teachers have the chance to participate in a CoI they gain a sense of what it is like to participate in a CoI as a member of a group rather than solely as the facilitator, and this may further inform their pedagogical practice. David Kennedy (2015) suggests teachers sit in on a CoI that explores teachers' assumptions about children and childhood that projects onto their treatment of children. This is one method by which teachers could reflect upon their role in creating space to listen to children's voices, as mentioned earlier in relation to challenging stereotypes of children as unknowing.

One of the benefits of the CoI is that students are encouraged to work towards establishing truth, or justified beliefs. In helping a student to look for good evidence to support their ideas or those of others, and encouraging them to notice when such evidence is lacking, the student can start to trust their own ability to critically discern what they should believe and what they should question. This is empowering. When developed in a communal setting like a CoI it is also useful as the participant begins to see themselves as a member of a group of inquirers. In the CoI, individuals are encouraged to reflect upon their own ideas as well as those of others and to be open to new information as it comes to light. Thus the process of inquiry leading to knowledge is structured but democratic, dynamic, self-correcting, and resists collapse into relativism by continuing dialogue rather than ending a conversation when opinions differ (Golding, 2011, pp. 476 & 482).

Having said that, when conducting CoIs with five year olds, Daniel and Delsol (2005, p. 82) discovered that after having conducted philosophy in the kindergarten classroom over the course of a year, the students had evolved to a position of relativism. This move was considered an improvement on the students' original thinking skills because the children had initially started with a fixed perspective or opinion that seemed to them so obviously true it did not require any justification. From this solipsistic stance whereby only their own opinion was considered as truth, the students came to understand that others had ideas and beliefs and opinions that differed to their own. The children learned that there were other perspectives on what was "true" or "right" and this led to a pluralistic account of truth that was related to intersubjectivity. Daniel and Delsol (2005) remark:

> Intersubjectivity presupposes that pupils are, to a certain extent,
> aware that they need their peers in order to transcend their own
> beliefs and concepts, to increase coherence in their judgments, and
> to construct their comprehension of the world. (p. 82)

The thinking skills that are developed in an early childhood P4C classroom rest on the idea that the meaning we make in the world is shared and, in this way, democratic. Therefore, we need to trust others with whom we share this experience of making meaning – which will also include challenging ideas as well as justifying the meaning we make as individuals. For children who continue

to practice philosophy in the classroom and participate in well-functioning CoIs, they will further develop their critical thinking skills with a view to becoming *reasonable* citizens. Daniel and Delsol (2005) identify that reasonableness is what prevents children resorting to violence in school settings.

Crucially, pluralistic truth need not result in subjectivism. As the CoI aims at truth, the resistance of collapse into subjectivism is important as not all ideas are of *equal value.* This is particularly relevant when dealing with moral questions and ethical concepts. After young children develop the relativistic stance after having only been solipsistic in their worldview, the next step is for them to practice critical engagement with multiple perspectives with a view to formulating shared truth. Seeking truth or shared values involves discarding the 'worst' ideas and seeking justification for the better ideas. Defending the existence of "shared values" is a pragmatic claim made by contemporary Aristotelians such as Alasdair MacIntyre. While some values are contextual—for example, different cultures have various cultural traditions—there are still common, human values that are shared or normative. Such universal values include "do not unnecessarily harm another" or "we should protect children" (MacIntyre, 2007). While the interpretation of these values may vary over time and across cultures, they may also be debated and judged. As MacIntyre (2007) explains, "a living tradition then is a historically extended, socially embodied argument" (p. 222). The important thing about dialogue is that we work *together* to gain an ever-improved understanding of ideas and practices that promote human well-being.

The problem with a relativistic stance is that it stops dialogue because it assumes that we are all radically different from one another. Subjectivism and cultural relativism, for instance, ends discussion by simply stating "what is true for me is true for me and what is true for you is true for you." Oddly, the culturally bound truth is *absolute* for those within that culture, and one can only proclaim cultural relativism by rising above it (and giving it up) in order to view all culturally bound truth as relative. In this way, cultural relativism is self-refuting (Quine, 1975). In relation to a CoI, shared truth is aimed at and thus truth is viewed pragmatically as pluralistic, not relativistic. It is important to note that the role of the facilitator and, by association, teacher training becomes central to the successful nature of CoIs whereby the discussion need not collapse into subjectivism (Gardner, 2015; Golding, 2011; Bleazby, 2011).

A case study: Buranda State School

An interesting case study in the effectiveness of P4C can be found in a primary school located in Queensland, Australia. Lynne Hinton was the principal of Buranda State School from 1996 to the end of 2009. When she first arrived at the school, Buranda was part of the federally funded "Disadvantaged Schools Program" and the later "Special Programs School Scheme" due to the low socio-economic area in which it was set as identified by census data (Golding, Gurr, & Hinton, 2012, p. 94). Due to Hinton's leadership and innovation, Buranda transformed from being, "a small, declining, inner city primary school where students were generally disengaged and achieving poor academic results, to a thriving school with outstanding academic results, well above state and national means in all aspects of literacy and numeracy" (Golding, Gurr, & Hinton, 2012, p. 94; Hinton, 2003). Hinton transformed Buranda State School into a "thinking school" by employing P4C methodology in order to educate students to "think

clearly, reason well and make sound judgements, and become reflective, thoughtful, well-rounded and responsible young people" (Golding, Gurr, & Hinton, 2012, p. 94).

The whole-school P4C approach trialled at Buranda primary school provides us with impressive empirical results as the school transformed from a difficult, low-achieving institution with behavioural problems in the schoolyard and classroom to an environment that was positive. This change was initiated by Hinton leading the teachers at the school to create a new, shared vision (Hinton, 2003, p. 49) with a view to improving student outcomes. This was successfully achieved by implementing the P4C pedagogy. The change was evident in the playground where there was less bullying, and also in the classroom, whereby students displayed thinking skills that demonstrated they were able to reflect upon their own ideas and treat others fairly (Burgh, Field, & Freakley, 2006).

Along with the case study of Buranda, there is further empirical evidence that children who engage in the CoI approach when studying philosophy in the classroom are more likely to achieve better academic results along with additional social benefits such as better self-esteem and the demonstration of empathy for others (Millett & Tapper, 2012). I would also argue that trust was gained at Buranda—a trust in the school and its teachers, as well as amongst the students. As was evident in the research conducted by Bryk and Schneider (2003) in the USA, effective leadership supported positive school reform at Buranda. Each person would have started to trust the environment in which they found themselves, and would have then slowly been able to trust themselves in order to eventually give expression to their own ideas within this educational context. Trust would have played a role in the increased happiness and success of the school, which also improved the well-being of the students, those employed by the school as well as the wider community.

Trust and well-being: Concluding thoughts

While practicing philosophical inquiry in the classroom, students are asked to listen to their own voices and work on developing their questions and ideas. They are also asked to work collaboratively with others, which involves trusting as well as being trustworthy. The earlier such training is commenced, including in pre-primary and kindergarten classrooms, the better. The P4C classroom aims at creating a safe space in which children are given a voice and also asked to listen to and reflect upon the voices of others. When this works well, trust is established along with a feeling of well-being. By engaging in CoI discussions, students have the opportunity to pursue truth for its own sake, as opposed to simply being asked to regurgitate facts. Teachers and educational institutions have an important role to play in helping to shape good citizens. We must train the *good* habits of the rational individual that include critical and creative thinking, the intellectual and moral virtues such as trust and trustworthiness, along with discernment and empathy. Such skills are required to flourish and may be applied not only to intellectual work but also to our social lives and even the technological sources of information with which we engage routinely in today's society (D'Olimpio, 2013).

By defining trust as a virtue that is necessary for a sense of well-being, I have offered one way in which we can cultivate trust and practice being trustworthy in

an educational context. P4C methodology, including the community of philosophical inquiry, allows students to practice critical reflection and collaborative thinking while aiming at shared, democratic truth. The CoI pedagogy practiced by advocates of philosophy for children is a useful praxis that allows children to build upon, as well as question, their own ideas as well as those of others in a respectful manner. Self-confidence and self-trust can grow as children learn to be discerning and prudent. Trust in others may also be cultivated in the P4C classroom, contributing to a general sense of well-being not only in the classroom or the schoolyard, but also in life.

References

Aristotle. (1876). *The nicomachean ethics.* London, United Kingdom: Longmans, Green.

Baier, A. (1984). Trust and antitrust. *Ethics, 96*(2), 231-260.

Baier, A. (1992). Trusting people. *Philosophical Perspectives, 6*, 137-153.

Bleazby, J. (2011). Overcoming relativism and absolutism: Dewey's ideals of truth and meaning in philosophy for children. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 43*(5), 453-466.

Braddock, M. (2010). Constructivist experimental philosophy on well-being and virtue. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy, 48*(3), 295-323.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40-45.

Burgh, G., Field, T., & Freakley, M. (2006). Ethics and the community of inquiry: Education for deliberative democracy. South Melbourne, Australia: Thomson.

Burgh, G., & Yorshansky, M. (2011). Communities of inquiry: Politics, power and group dynamics. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 43*(5). doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2007.00389.x

Cam, P. (Ed.). (1993; 1997). *Thinking stories.* Alexandria, NSW, Australia: Hale & Iremonger.

Cam, P. (2006). *Twenty thinking tools.* Camberwell, Victoria, Australia: ACER. A modified version of the Question Quadrant retrieved from http://www.philosophyineducation.com/resources/Question+Quadrant.pdf

Daniel, M. F., & Delsol, A. (2005). Learning to dialogue in kindergarten: A case study. *Analytic Teaching, 25*(3), 23-52.

Dewey, J. (1997). *How we think.* Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Dewey, J. (2004). *Democracy and education.* Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

D'Olimpio, L. (2013). Multiliteracies and the critical thinker: Philosophical engagement with mass media in the classroom. *PESA Conference Proceedings 2013.* Melbourne, Australia: Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia. Retrieved from http://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/910394/PESA _2013_Edited_Conference_Proceedings.pdf

Frost-Arnold, K. (2014). The cognitive attitude of rational trust. *Synthese, 191*, 1957-1974. doi:10.1007/s11229-012-0151-6.

Gardner, S. T. (2015). Commentary on "inquiry is no mere conversation". *Journal of Philosophy in Schools, 2*(1). Retrieved from http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/jps/article/view/1105

Golding, C. (2011). The many faces of constructivist discussion. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 43*(5), 467-483.

Golding, C., Gurr, D., & Hinton, L. (2012). Leadership for creating a thinking school at Buranda State School. *Leading & Managing, 18*(1), 91-106.

Hieronymi, P. (2008). The reasons of trust. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy, 86*(2), 213-236.

Hinton, L. (2003). Reinventing a school. *Critical and Creative Thinking: The Australasian Journal of Philosophy in Schools, 11*(2), 47-60.

Kennedy, K. (2015) Practicing philosophy of childhood: Teaching in the (r)evolutionary mode. *Journal of Philosophy in Schools, 2*(1). Retrieved from http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/jps/article/view/1099

Kraut, R. (2014). Aristotle's ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Retrieved from
http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/aristotle-ethics/

Lipman, M. (1991, 2003). Thinking in education. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After virtue: A study in moral theory.* Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press.

McLeod, C. (2014). Trust. In Zalta, E. N. (Ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Retrieved from
http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/trust/

Millett, S., & Tapper, A. (2012). Benefits of collaborative philosophical inquiry in schools. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 44*(5), 546-567.

Murris, K. (2013). The epistemic challenge of hearing child's voice. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 32*(3), 245-259.

Murris, K. (2015). Listening-as-usual: A respond to Michael Hand. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 34*, 331-335. doi:10.1007/s11217-015-9467-2

Nishikawa, L., & Stolle, D. (2012). Do not trust strangers: How parents shape the generalized trust of their children. In M. Sasaki & R. M. Marsh (Eds.), *Trust: Comparative perspectives.* Leiden, Netherlands: Brill. eBook ISBN 9789004221383

Potter, N. N. (2002). *How can I be trusted? A virtue theory of trustworthiness.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster.

Sharp, A. M. (1993). The community of inquiry: Education for democracy. In M. Lipman (Ed.), *Thinking children and education* (337–345). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Solomon, R. C., & Flores, F. (2003). *Building trust: In business, politics, relationships, and life.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Splitter, L. (2011). Identity, citizenship and moral education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 43*(5), 484-505.

Splitter, L., & Sharp, A. M. (1995). *Teaching for better thinking: The classroom community of inquiry.* Melbourne, Australia: ACER.

Quine, W. V. O. (1975). On empirically equivalent systems of the world. *Erkenntnis, 9*(3), 313-328.